

the Register

spring 2013





the Register 2013

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The Register is published twice a year by the students of the Boston Latin School. Students in Classes I through VI are invited to submit their original writing and artwork. Pieces are selected by the Editorial Board of *The Register* on the basis of quality, not name recognition; the writers of all pieces remain anonymous to the Editorial Board during the selection process to ensure that no one is given an unfair advantage.

The Register

BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL
VOLUME CXXXVI SPRING 2013

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SPECIAL THANKS

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outside cover **JULIA**, EMMA HENDERSON, I

inside cover **GUATAPÉ**, KARA-JIANNA UNDAG, III



Streets of Paris

ANLI XIANG, III • OIL PAINTING

with your sandbox shovel
you move mountains twice your height.
you are sovereign king of a frozen realm
where snow drifts rise to my hips
and your head comes just past my knees.

you lift icy boulders larger
than you can wrap your arms around.
you struggle through perilous dunes,
risking your life in sinking quicksand; dangers
must be braved if the car windows are to be cleared.

your cheeks are red and
your lips blue, but no,
you are not cold; there is
a flame in you too fierce
for ice to much bother you.

statistically, you ask fifteen hundred questions
every day. half of those start with why.
today we are all you, with red cheeks and
curious eyes and ready laughter. when it's
this cold, we all seem warm.

you can't always remember
what comes between saturday and monday but
you know your name and you know
that snow is magic. tomorrow it will be dirty slush
and in ten years you will be sad, but

now, all is glittering and bright and cold;
new englanders disprove our unfriendly
reputation. neighbors exchange names and

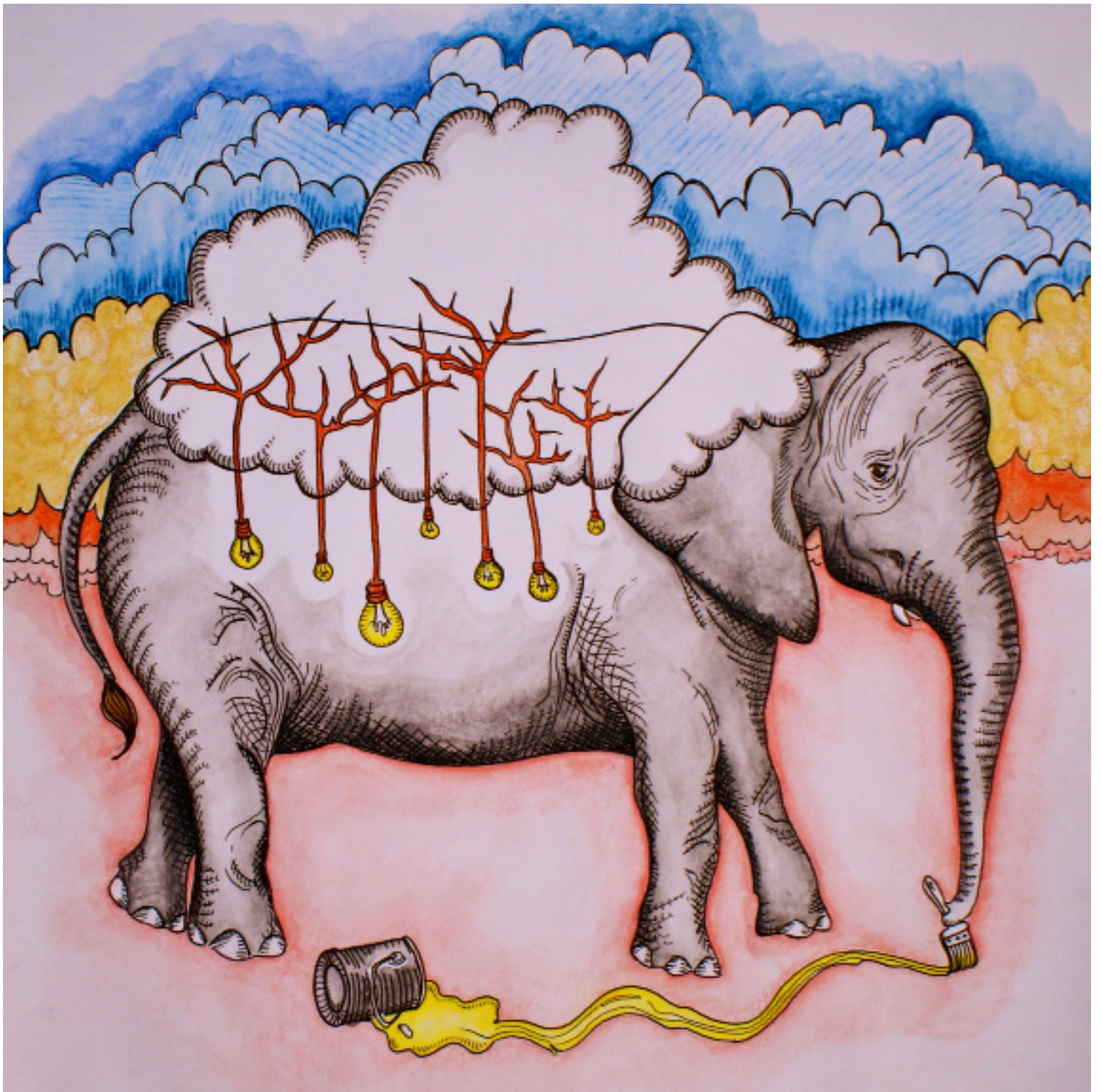
smiles. snow dances. shovels beat out
the unfaltering pulse of this city.

—Nora Hill, II



Ferry

ONA LEPESKA-TRUE, I • FILM PHOTOGRAPHY



60 Watts

GRACE PEARSON, I • WATERCOLOR AND PEN

A Sheep's Fancy

I see it in the space between the letters.
I see it in the caked-on glory and the pencil pickings and the unmade beds.
I see it in the too-much-already-too-soon-too-young-all-done-all-set-but-not-yet-let's-go faces.
It happens when I ask myself "who are you?"

I always wither before I'm strong. And then I wither again. I am trapped.
You are the fish and I'm always done jumping until I do. I am trapped.
My fingers are on scissors' hands until I touch the canvas. I am trapped.
Trapped and stuck and drunk; there were 87 bottles before I stopped counting.

Bottoms up.

I see it in the time we never spent together and in all the time the sheep betrayed my eyelids.
Waiting to become a sheep, I am trapped.
When the words forget my face, I am trapped.
When my dreams recall the stupor, I am trapped.

This place is my catch-any catch-never catch-22, and I am a follower.
Trapped, it seems, by my own anticipation to be born.
I will never leave until I sprout, and I cannot sprout until I leave.
I am the broken.

Brown eyes and dirty clothes.
Trembling neurons, trembling pencil.
Dusty fingers and all the memories in the fold.
These things trap me.

And yet,

The paper's filling.

—Talia Goodman, II

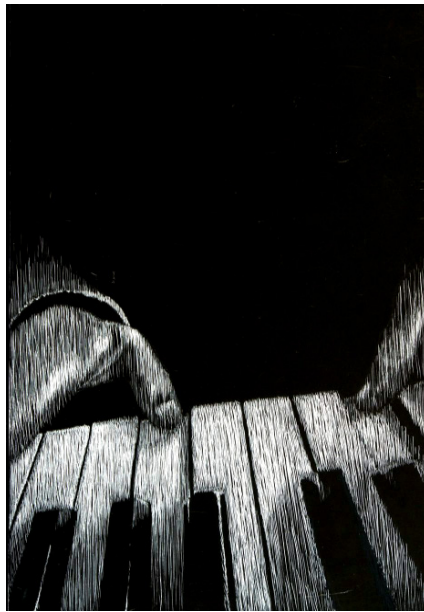


Rest

A baby blue background contrasts the cherry colored wood of the piano. Her back is faced towards him as he watches her weave melodies with yellowed piano keys and displays them in the hot summer air. She's wearing black, odd for a Sunday in July, but she's a very peculiar girl. It's what he liked about her. She always makes sure that there's an empty spot at the bar, waiting for a guest that never comes. Maybe that's why a little while back she started playing a different tune. The butter melts at the middle of the tables and her back grows stiff from the wooden chair. Her fingers never falter, however, nor does her head twist to catch a glimpse of the man who is always there to listen to her play.

He moved to her town a few days ago. Took a job in a law firm because he's always been good at arguing. He's quick with a joke and sometimes his personality swells so large he can fill an entire room with the sound of his laugh. His voice rolls deep like the sea but lately he's been feeling shallow. Sometimes he thinks that he talks so much his words feel worn and threadbare. His jaw locks from soothing everyone with stories and smiling to fill all the empty spaces. He's awfully tired of being quick with a joke instead of an ear to lend. She gave him an opportunity to listen. He wonders if she wonders why he's always there to watch her. He asks himself why such a pretty girl would hide in this cavern of a tavern playing songs for strangers. He wishes that maybe he could be her harmony because she sounds awfully lonely. But for the first time in his life, he doesn't know what to say. So he just sits inside of the humid room, romancing the idea that she makes music just for him.

She was the girl forever left behind who people had grown tired of feeling sorry for. All she needs is the feel of keys beneath her fingers. She is not alone, but she is lonely. She's always thought that music fills the air far better than the tired whine of human voices. He used to play the guitar. They used to dabble with duets and she thought that they would have a lifelong career of caring for each other. But then he left. Without a word, a whisper, or a note. So now she beats her own notes from the tired piano in the local tavern and tries to fill the void in her soul with songs. It's easy to hide on a stage when one is so shrouded by people's expectations. She'd rather have others make up stories about her than tell the real truth. She's not a mute; in fact, that moment when he took a different track is when she learned that no words can be just as painful as hurtful ones. Silence, in a way, is one of the deepest holes. It's probably why people are always attempting to fill it with sounds. She just struggles to find a way to express her pain without feeling vain. To her, sadness has always been so superficial. She knows all the faces that come to see her play. She's memorized every



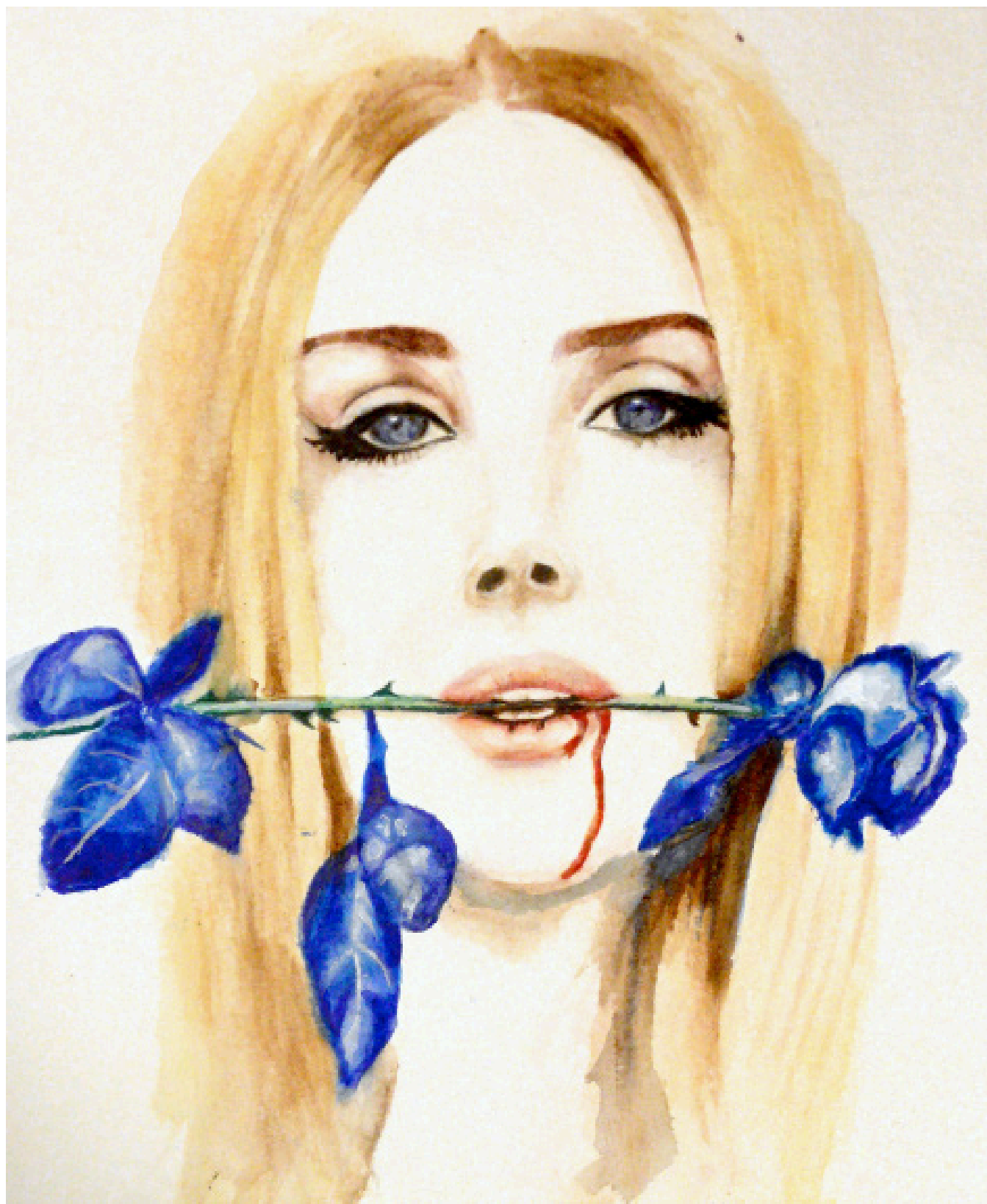
The Show

IVANNA LIN, II • SCRATCHBOARD

quirk and habit just from the fleeting seconds her gaze spends away from her music book. She noticed when a new man started coming a little while back. When they first made eye contact, she forgot a line or two. She's been fumbling more ever since that fateful day, and whenever he comes to watch, she sense his presence like a shadow.

It's funny how well strangers know each other. Sometimes, words are the last thing human interaction needs. Sometimes it's easier to just watch, to inspect someone's spirit until it becomes ingrained in the pupils of the eyes. Sometimes there is beauty in that simple stage of personal unknown. Every unfamiliar face is a new story; every different skin tone is a new connection. He is a man whose greatest fear is stuttering and stammering, but for that moment all she is to him is a mystery with musical training. She is a girl who let being solitary suck the words from her mouth, but to her he is just another face in the crowd. For four minutes they can let melodies fill all the divots in their personal dead air. In reality, no one should be afraid of silence. Humans are musicians, and even though it seems like quiet is the only thing that separates the two at the tavern, one must always remember that silence is the beginning to every great song.

—Vivian Herbert, IV



Untitled

SHIRLEY FANG, II • WATERCOLOR

T-7

A picture's worth a thousand words,
but what of every single one was a lie?
A girl died that day.

She echoes through the hollowness of your bones
and it haunts you.
She found herself a home, eloquent and grandiose
curled up between the vertebrae of your spine.
Ironic,
because you never had backbone.

And she's snuck up through your rib cage,
fracturing every weak bone
and suffocating your beating heart;
She's sprouted up through your lungs
as a last attempt to keep you from being a murderer.

A lie is worth a million words;
Thousands of secret love affairs
tied up with your twisted tongue.
No wonder you could never tell the truth.

—Corrinne Goggin, I

black marauder

You are no ruler
of great empires; who would want
this girl as their queen?

He is your every
thing, is he not? Crystal
ball eyes, undertow hands,

heartbeat louder than
a bomb. Sinbad smile. He is
your sin; bad, is it

not? He is across
the seven seas. Beetle-bright,
bottle-shined, the waves

ready to swallow
you. Black marauder, ink and
scars, let him plunder

treasure, not trinkets
in your chest. No shipwrecks now;
not tonight, drunk off

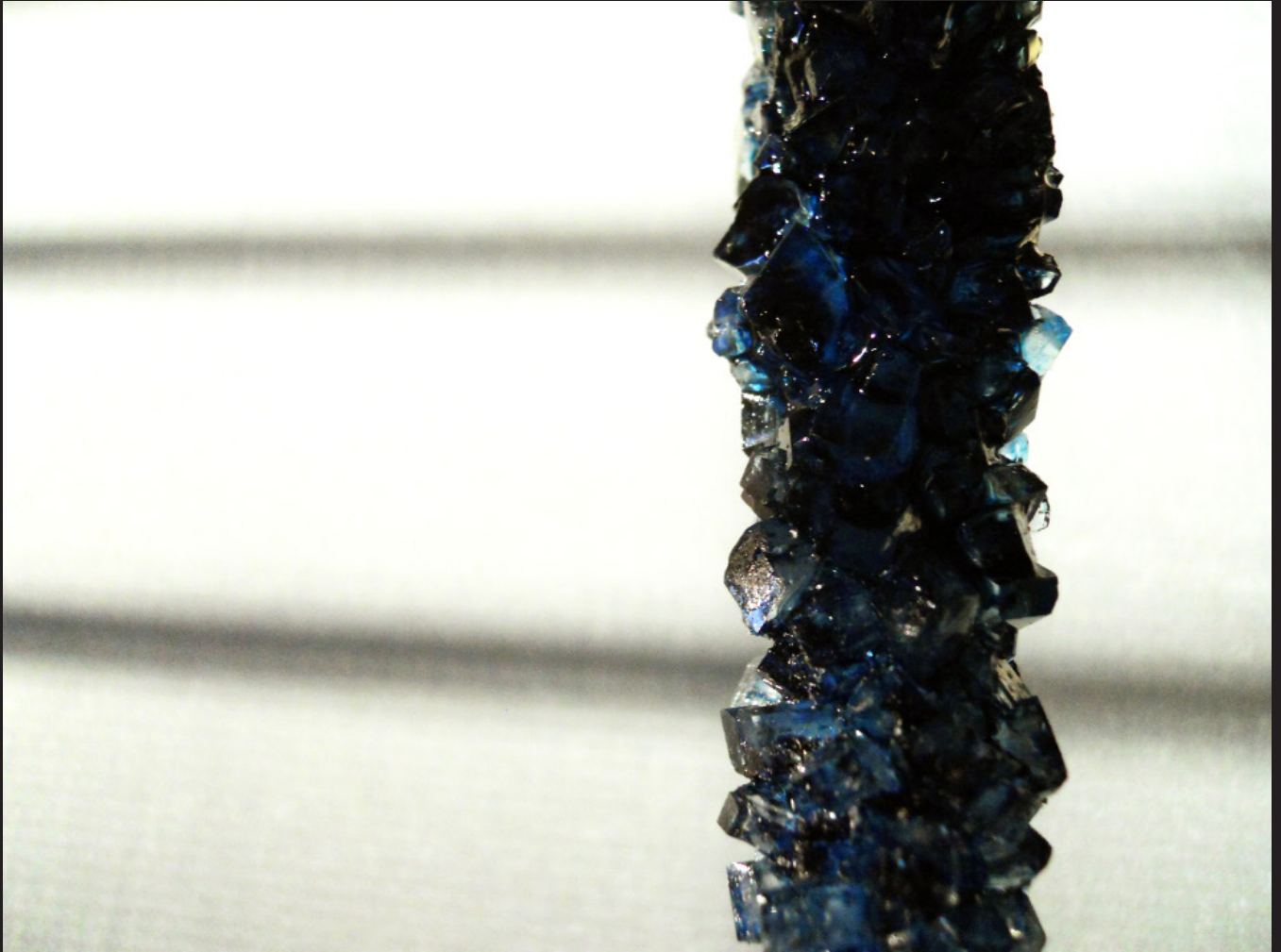
the moonshine. No skull
and crossbones on a platter.
They are not served here.

The ocean is the
worst four thousand miles; even
you can't swim that far.

You are not the face
that launched a thousand ships and
brought them all back home.

—Lian Parsons, II





Rock Candy

AMY YANG, II • DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY



Thom

MALCOLM DOREMUS CUETARA, III • BLOCK PRINT

The Little Matchstick Boy

I knew a little boy once whose name was spelled with wild grass and a crisp autumn breath. They tied twine in his hair, rough and fraying at the ends, so that he wouldn't drift away with the next breeze. They were cautious and fearful for the little boy. I suppose they were only making up for age, because he was a little boy, and little boys don't have time to worry about where the next storm will take them.

He loved to run, this little boy, and he could run for hours and hours on end, skipping past houses like it was a game of hopscotch, only he lost all his stones and river glass and pretended that he had seeds instead. Wherever he stepped, a sapling sprouted. On tip-toe he could find pansies and wallflowers darting softly behind. Once, he decided to jump, and wobbling slightly after he had landed, he found himself in the middle of a forest. When it rained, they used to tell him to smile so that he could cheer up Mister Sun, and he would grin like it was the funniest joke in the world, and run through the fading spray, laughing.

One day, he got tired of running. He didn't like the way the mud slapped at the back of his feet when he ran in the rain, and he didn't like the way the trees seemed to sneer at him as he ran by. The wallflowers wilted and the pansies shrieked obscenities, and he was just so very, very tired. He sat down in a clearing where it was winter and all the trees and flowers were frozen and hard, and there he slept for a very, very long time.

He woke up one day as the wind carried voices with it crying, little boy! little boy! He asked the wind if he was the one it was looking for, and the wind replied, untie the twine from your hair, and perhaps I shall tell you. And because he was curious, he loosened the knots in his hair. Am I the little boy you're looking for? he asked, but the wind made no reply. Am I? He repeated, more to himself than to the foreign wind. No, the wind replied at last. Only little boys can be caught in me, and you are no little boy. It drifted away, once again crying, little boy! little boy! And he wondered when, exactly, he had stopped being a little boy. He remembered he had been, once, but it had been a very, very long time ago, and all he could remember was feeling so very, very tired.

The mud splashed around his ankles once again as rain drenched the clearing. He thought he remembered having something to do (Mister Sun is sad, he thought, but he forgot what it was he should do). The sun leaked its rain-drop-tears and waited for a little boy to smile, but the boy who was not such a little boy anymore only looked up and walked out of the clearing, hoping to get dry.

—Jane Zhao, II

Self Dissection

I liked the cool vibrations on my lips
When I slipped a couple of horse snorts instead of kisses
On your warm cheeks; delicious trickery
You always despised.
Immature, they say.
I just want to be a real boy!
I like to sing rap songs in opera voices
Or convulse on the dance floor of my sister's room –
Buffering the outside noises with unintelligible booms
Of my feet reenacting World War II with the wooden surface
Mommy-dancing at seventeen and I've never had children
I don't know how they do it:
Multiplying the species and trying to mold another into the best person
They wish they were—
A responsibility I'll defer,
Indefinitely

I've never lied
Or tried to deceive the public of my failures
I wear them proudly on my chest
Scribble them lightly on my temple –
Never forgotten.
It just feels so rotten to pretend to feel what I don't
When I was taught to value my unpopular opinion.

On my second month in America,
I told my dad he couldn't meet my teacher
Because "Americans didn't like black people"
I was only six; didn't understand the relics
Of pigmented flesh
I watched his ebony eyes sink
Into their chocolate-covered sockets
He stuffed his hand in his pockets,
Gave me a crisp green note and
Told me to buy a snack on my way to school

My first boyfriend was deep amber
But “black” nonetheless
I put my parents under distress, didn’t I?
I just wish I listened,
Loved more,
Cursed less.

I’m not holy.
I’m not a saint.
I’m a believer in believing
Any belief paraphrased by man
Is ultimately questionable.
But I’m not afraid to admit
That I don’t have the answers,
Sometimes.
I just know I didn’t want to hurt
Those that loved me at my worst.
I blame it on my heavy tongue
And large lungs; made to kill,
Smearing shrill noises
In permanent ink—
Sounds that weren’t meant to
Mean a thing.
So I cling to the memories;
Pause, rewind, and never repeat.
These are some of the feats
Of a girl like me;
That always had too much
But never enough.

Mommy said she raised a rebel—
A crazed miniature devil.

—Anonymous

Field of Memories

There is a fertile field of earth in Iowa, where the vastness of the corn, shimmering golden in the heat of the sun, rustles and sways, hushing, almost humming, with a steady pulse of life. Many city-dwellers would glance upon this monotonous yellow plain, interrupted by a few shoddy houses poking up from the earth, as disorienting and confusing. Halina found comfort in it. There was something soothing about routine, about continuity, that she preferred over the complexities of life.

In the afternoons, it was the habit of Halina to sit, with her large turned-in-feet steadying the rocking of her chair, on the porch overlooking the cornfields. Today it was one of those perfect afternoons to just rock back and forth. The chair groaning under her weight, musky smell of ripe cornstalks, leaves blowing in the wind, ravens and crows cawing from the field at sunset and nothing would ever change.

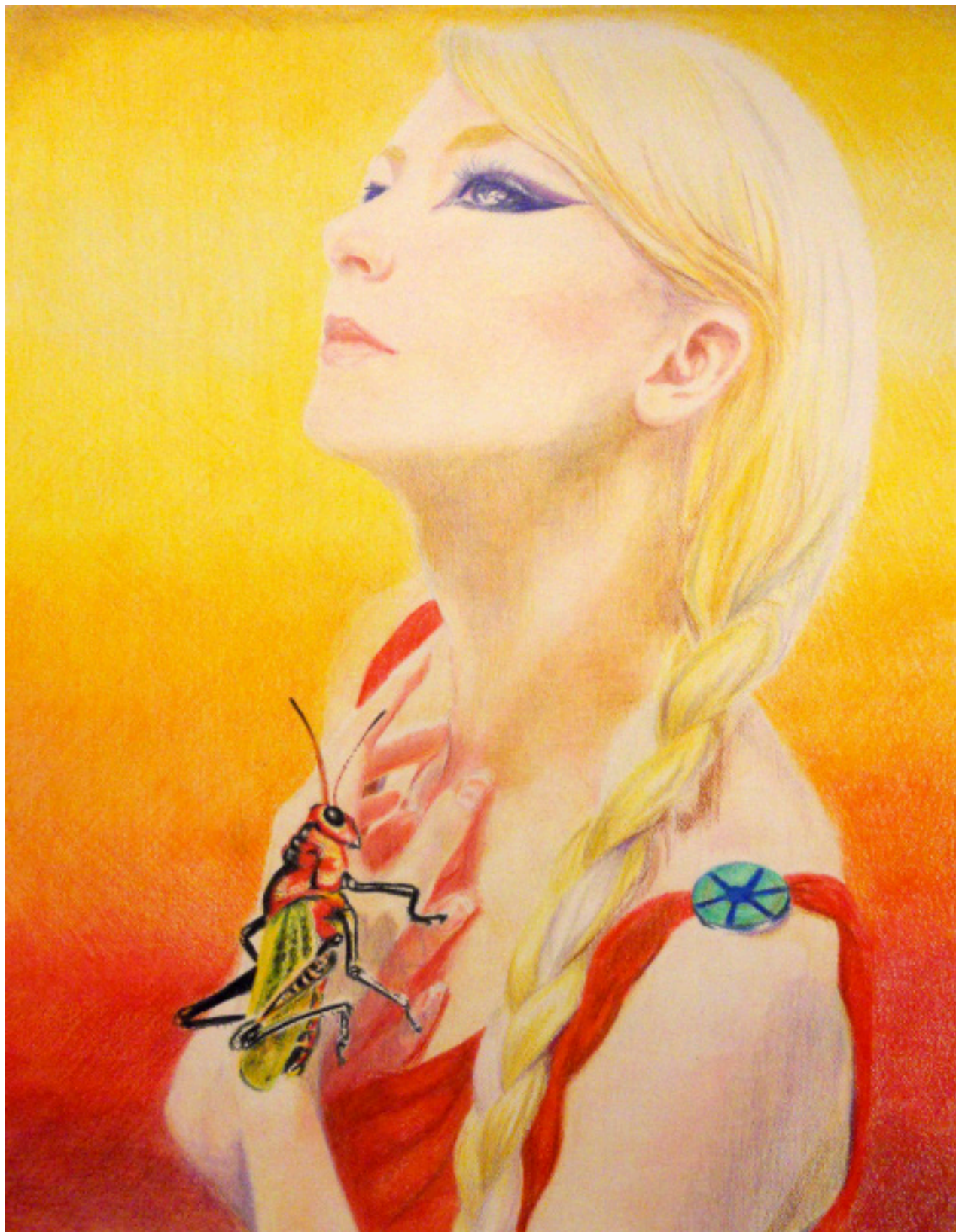
Halina was so lost in her reverie that she didn't feel the scalding sun warm her skin or feel her feathery angel hair turn into steaming straw. She probably could have paused a moment to unbutton her worn denim jacket, but that would have interrupted the tranquility of constancy. A few crickets chirped reminding her of her early childhood days.

She remembered the squalor her parents had lived in. They were her Ukrainian parents, who arrived in America with nothing but their own hands in their pockets. She missed those hands—especially the hands of her mother. They were the cracked red hands that worked the land with determination and nurtured her with tenderness. As a child, however, Halina hated her mother's hands. She didn't know why, but something about them seemed clumsy and pathetic. They were like bears, the ones that lived in the desolate, barren land of Siberia, who couldn't climb up the trees. Always reaching, but never grasping, those hands seemed to bear the burden of broken dreams.

And so she would escape from this sad, broken place, to the cornfields, where she would wander for hours amid the cornstalks that kissed the heavens. Sometimes, she feared losing herself in these towering stalks, losing herself to the chirping crickets, and losing herself in a deep slumber. Other times, she would embrace the isolation. She would welcome this plain, where time seemed to stop, where earth and heaven seemed to meet, and where all her worries melted into the comforting dullness of passivity. Always, however, she would envy the way the sooty birds would take off, claws pushing off of the stalks, wings unfurling like silk garments, bodies ascending into the limitless reaches of the sky, caws answering her question—where are you heading? —with the single word, away.

A distant barking of a dog abruptly brought her to the present. Somehow she found herself, once more, among the cornfields. Her clunky shoes, treading on the ground alerted a flock of birds. For once in her lifetime, she realized, as she stood in the middle of the corn, in solitude, the wind cooling her angel white hair, that she was not jealous of the crows that were flying freely towards the heavens. She was happy, she understood, surrounded by her field of memories. It didn't matter what others thought, what others did, what others had. For she felt, from the depths of her heart, that her beautiful cornfield was a heaven on earth. And hers alone.

—Michaela Vitagliano, II



Aurora and Tithonus

YIN YU JI, V• COLORED PENCIL

BERRIES

This is my rendition
Where purity is the color of ebony ashes or cherry mahogany
And the demon, devoid of tinted hues, crouches on the shoulder of my roots.

Spoon-fed religion, brought me down to my knees
Scraped along the sacred soil we toiled for the belly of the demon.
I won't claim the uninvited
Seizing the sweeter berries and coating them with pale pigment.
Originative of corn, originative of spirits,
Thrusting under the doves devouring our ligaments.

—Gloribel Rivas, III





Untitled

SADIA BIES, I • ACRYLIC

Untitled

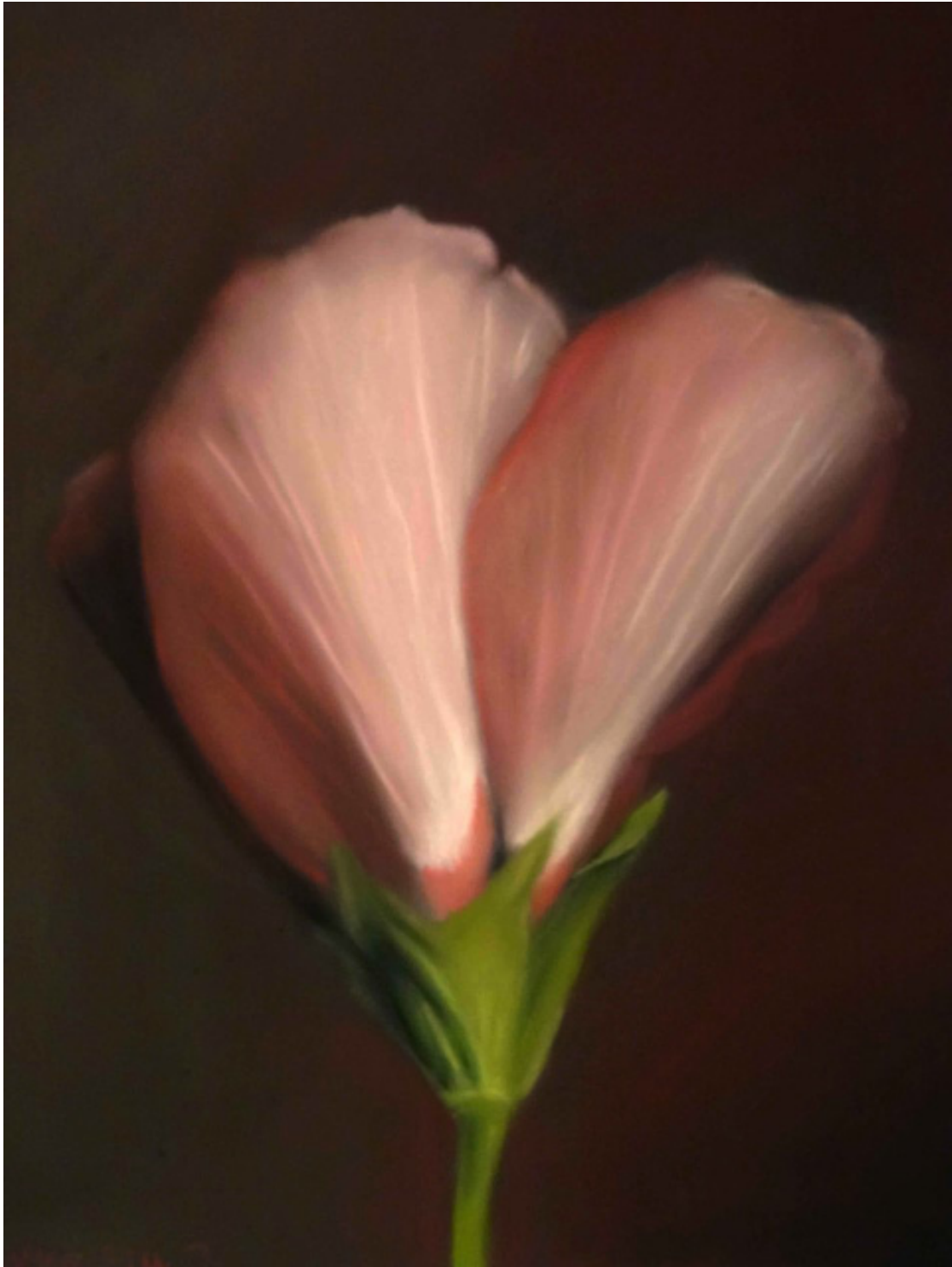
ENA KANTARDZIC, I • MIXED MEDIA



Happy Accident

I've seen enough Biology textbooks
to know that if I pull myself apart,
I am just a pile of
string and sponge,
which makes me
no different than a happy accident
at the bottom of a craft drawer.

—Anonymous



La Fleur

GWYNETH JACKMAN, IV • PASTEL

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Five Broken Cameras

He is born as his grandfather's olive trees are torn from the earth. Expelled from his mother with a wail, as if he felt the roots ripping from the soil, and breathed and lived as the olives fell like bullets. His father's hands and spade and hope plant new trees in the soil. These will grow.

He knows the word for "shell" before his third birthday, though he has never seen the ocean. "Cartridge," he calls, "Daddy, I found another one!" The skins of these metal beetles crunch under his feet. "Army," he chirps. "Soldier."

His mother does not let him and his brothers play outside much anymore. She hangs the laundry out to dry and listens to the shells echoing in the village streets.

He goes to the construction site, where already the fence slicing through their land is a thicket of barbed wire, and big men with sunglasses and guns aimed toward him. He is not afraid. He gives the olive branch his father had saved from one of the olive trees to a soldier.

"It means peace," his father had told him.

The protests are happening every Friday now, and his father allows him to go to one. The tear gas burns his eyes and lungs, and he watches, unsettled and disoriented, as his neighbors are arrested and his uncle is caught in the shoulder by a bullet.

"The soldiers were right in front of Daddy's car," he tells his mother. He is still trembling. She wipes a dish dry, and he crunches a Dorito, trying to get rid of the gas taste in his mouth.

"Were you scared?"

"Yes," he admits.

"You're a hero,"

"No!" He does not want to be a hero. He just wants to be himself.

"Yes, a hero."

His father spends some time in jail. Soldiers had come in the middle of the night and told him to stop his filming and to leave. He remembers when one of his brother's classmates was arrested. His eyes were wide and frightened, and an American shouted, "How dare you arrest children!" He remembers when his uncle was arrested, how his grandfather jumped on the police car and sat on the hood to stop from taking him away, and how his grandmother wailed and shoved at the soldiers. They shoved back.

His mother used to say, "We're not done. We're not done until we say we're done." Now she shakes out the sheets and spreads them back on the bed. Her wrists flex restlessly as she smooths them down.

“When will this stop? What will the kids and I do if you go to jail again? What will we do? I’m just so tired.”

“Daddy, why don’t you kill the soldiers with a knife?”

His father straightens up, wincing as the stitches strain at the ripped skin of his belly. He holds out his hand for a wrench. The car he is fixing is the new one the family will use - the other one is wrapped up in the barrier, the barbed wire twined like a possessive lover’s arms, the body riddled with bullets, his father at the wheel.

“Because they would shoot me.”

He stares at his distorted reflection in the hubcaps as his father reaches for a bolt.

“Would there be more?”

“Yes. Why do you want to hurt the soldiers?”

Phil flashes across his mind. Phil, flag waving, shouting at the soldiers to go home during every single protest, laughing with the other men at the outpost they’d built, joking with the wives, running with him and his friends in their schoolyard soccer games. Phil dropping like a bag of sand when the soldiers raised their guns.

“Because they killed my Phil. Why did they kill him? What did he do to them?”

His father cannot answer.

Despite the dark bags under her eyes that carry so much, his mother still sings to him at night to remind him that the sound of gunfire is not the only one that exists.

“We want to sleep!” He chants with his brothers and friends in the streets, waving their banners, and banging on their mothers’ pots and pans. “We want to sleep!”

The trees his father planted are almost as tall as him now. He breaks off a branch and offers it to a soldier, a boy, just like him. The boy’s eyes are brown when he takes off his sunglasses. He is scared of me, he realizes. The soldier boy takes the branch.

Tomorrow, his father will bring the whole family to see the ocean. He will pick up a sea shell and feel it, sun-warmed and solid, in his palm.

“Daddy,” he will call, “Daddy, I found another one!”

— Lian Parsons, II

Persephone

YIRAN BUCKLEY, I • DIGITAL ART



Weathered Night

Heavy winds throw deft punches
Against our dry insipid faces
Cherished plant won't burn at all
Flames prove fragile in finite places

Night's polished fingers wrap around
The block we've walked for countless days
But houses here, most oddly foreign
When enjoinders curtail impotent blaze

Ephemeral Silence conquers waves
Built gladiator slays his eager foe
The moment comes to flick the switch
To at last conflagrate dead Night's show

But vanished stars herald intermission
That lasts but seconds in quietude
For tears from Heaven falling hard and fast
Are unthinking tears barred customs elude

—Mike Sitcawich, I

Untitled

ALEX YUAN, I • DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY



Untitled

KARI CHAN, I • DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

THE BLACK SIDE OF THE POOL

She feels a tug.
It is heavy, dripping with the salt of a summer's day
Wrapped in passion, pricked with blood to seal the deal.
They were friends. They were blood brothers.
Brothers because lovers never last.
Everyone knows that.
She reels it in.
It is slimy, slick with the residue from swimming in the black side of the pool.
Baggage, bondage. Filmy encumbrance that won't come clean.
Come clean.
She unhooks it.
It is thrashing, thin, transient.
Smaller than she expected.
She tosses it back.
It hadn't even been worth saving.

— Sukhai Booker, II



Flowers for Mom

My mom has always loved flowers. Roses, lilies, daffodils, whatever they were... as long as they were flowers, she loved them – and the larger and more garishly colored, the better.

Before we bought our own house, she spoke constantly of a little vegetable garden tended for practicality, and a blooming garden tended for pleasure; but when Dad finally shook hands with the realtor, it was to seal a deal for a house that had none of those things. I saw her stare out the window. I saw her take in the rocky patches of dirt haphazardly placed among the concrete and the weed trimming the fence. I saw her smile collapse.

Still, she valiantly poured money and time into the non-existent garden. Replace the soil. Weed the dirt. Plant random flowers in random plots. My mom is neither a landscaper nor a gardener; she had a brown thumb instead of a green one. Although I reluctantly went out every morning to water the bulbs and sprouts, they either wilted or refused to bloom.

My mom kept at it. Of course she did; this was the same lady that would store my leftover rice in the fridge and reheat it to eat the next day. More fertilizer. More water. More time spent in the “garden”. She came home at eight o’clock each night, fell asleep at eleven, woke at seven to drive me to school, came home to don her “battle gear”, and went out to tackle the garden before driving off to work every morning. Every few evenings, I would massage her stiff back and grumble about the stupid flowers, the waste of time and money and effort from the same woman that stole three Metros a day to use them as dinner place mats.

But gradually, so gradually that when the change took place, my eyes saw no difference –the buds opened and colors covered the front of my house.

Her garden bloomed.

The flowers were small. They were never going to grow up to be prized blossoms of beauty, not when they were placed so randomly that from afar our front yard looked like a five year old’s sketchpad. But my mom smiled as she stared at them, a secret, pleased smile; the same delighted smile I wear when I purchase food, books, games, clothes. Those were my frivolities. Flowers were hers. Only flowers.

I look now at her wrinkled forehead, her creased eyes, and I wonder morbidly how long she will be around to indulge her hobby. I tell her that, one day, when I am famous, I will buy her a mansion in California with a whole backyard full of flowers. She will walk under a rose arch, breathe in the fragrance, and admire the colors of the flowers. She will dip her white and soft hands under the fountain flow, while a young gardener standing behind tends to her flowers.

She laughs.

— Nhu Le, I



Julia

AURELIA PAQUETTE, I • ACRYLIC



Sketches

FRANCESCA VIOLICH • INK & PENCIL

Changes Due

“See the way the top of the building blinks?” he asks, pausing to breathe some warmth into his stiff fingers.

“Steady blue, clear view.
Flashing blue, changes due.
Steady red, rain ahead.
Flashing red, snow instead.”

We stand beneath Boston’s skyline, the February sky spite hard, tiny flakes that don’t even feel like snow at us. I begin to wonder if we are trapped inside a snow globe of the city, as if someone bumped the one that I bought for my grandmother when I moved here.

“Changes due, what does that mean?”

He shrugs back at me, “The guy who wrote it probably just needed something to rhyme with blue.”

I pull my hands from my coat pockets and press them to his cheeks as I think of all the things that rhyme with blue.

Glue. Flu. Queue. Askew.

The color returns to his cheeks as he places his hands on top of mine

“What would I do without you?”

Hue. Screw. Through. Dew.

“Do you want to go to Starbucks?” he continues. “I think you need something warm.”

— Eleanor Montgomery, I



Untitled

Just a seemingly ordinary cardboard box
A few folds and creases on the edges
Corners slightly dulled
A dent here and there
These small imperfections which apparently take away from its quality
Laid abandoned on the grimy city sidewalk
The box rested on its side
Its top unopened

No way to know what is inside
Unless one takes the time to look

Pedestrians came and went
One or two pausing to light a cigarette
A few stopping by the small family-owned general shop at the corner
Others leisurely strolling amongst the city road's age-old newspaper stands
Maneuvering between the sidewalk cracks and through the street's abundant supply of empty soda cans and old papers
Pennies balancing on the rails above the town's drains and sewers, rusted from their original copper shine
Most seemed to have somewhere to go –
A destination
A purpose

Well, one man was sure in a rush
Shouting angrily into his phone – the poor thing
Announcing for the world to hear
In a noticeably uncomfortable business suit and some fancy shoes
Probably in his mid-thirties
He came charging by
And without paying a bit of attention
The man accidentally kicked the innocent box that lay on the street
He turned back with his stocky face still fuming, red, and searing with impatience
To see what had just interrupted him going on his rampage
Obviously planning to criticize and reprimand whatever it was –
But with a quick irritated glance, he promptly paced away

A woman along with an elderly man also paid a brief surly visit
The younger woman approximately in her forties
In a faded plaid button-up and the trending denim skinny jeans
Toppling around in her glossy ruby heels
Assisting an elder – who, by a quick glimpse, would give the impression to be her father
The man, probably just reaching his seventies
Was outfitted in a striped cream-and-mahogany wool sweater and a pair of simple dress pants
Using what appeared to be a thick and durable black cane
But was actually hollow, with quite a few visible scratches and impressions

They came moderately up the street, gradually reaching the box
Which was supposedly in their way
The woman, with a hint of exasperation
Thrust the mediocre box with the side of her foot
Pressuring it to the unfortunately concrete walls of an ancient office building
Ostensibly aggravated, she guided the elderly man forward
Avoiding the bothersome box
As if it were a great obstacle
A vexatious trouble

And the poor insignificant cardboard box
Still with its folds and creases
Dents and dull, blunted, dwindled points
Remained silent and stationary on the beaten sidewalk

As heavy grey clouds gathered in the just recently clear cerulean sea
Another woman came shuffling by
Most likely living with nearly sixty years of existence, struggle and wisdom
In a worn thin jacket and a pair of over-sized sweatpants in a pale lapis blue
With her enduring feet in some no-name branded shoes
She had her eyes on the box from few yards up the lane
The woman faltered up to the evidently ordinary piece of cardboard with no sign of anticipation
She paused there before it for a moment
Then bent her petite body and crooked back
And hoisted up the box
It was light, she observed
Casually and with a gentle hand
She lifted up one flap on the top of the box
Then the other –
The woman hesitated for an instant
And peered inside the box
Without any expression visible on her wrinkled face
And then with a sigh of – what was it?
Relief? Satisfaction? Accomplishment?
Whatever it was,
It tugged steadily at the creases of her frail cracked lips
She smiled

No way to know what was inside
Unless one takes the time to look

And the rain came down.

— Kim Phan, V



you are my morning star

Did it hurt when you fell from heaven?
Did it hurt when you dropped at nine thousand miles an hour,
hair snagging on clouds and tearing off
 with your scalp?
Did it hurt when the pressure squeezing your legs shut
crushed your bones to powder, and so you marinated in the air,
 a sun-softened clump of flesh and feather?
Did it hurt when you hit the sidewalk, leveled the block
(teeth scattering for miles like red-rooted corn kernels),
 and you were a wind-tossed doll with a split skull?
Did it hurt? Did it hurt?
Is that why you are bald and soft and toothless, and
 can't remember what you ate for
 breakfast, or what your name is?
Is that why you mutter things, and
 frown when I show you the
 stuffed shark we bought
 ten summers ago?
Is that why you gape
 at the photo of
 us in the
 hammock, because
 the crash
 filled you
 with
 planets
 and
 moons?

—Connie Chang, III





Gabri #3

MALCOLM DOREMUS CUETARA, III • DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY



Crown of Flowers

ANLI XIANG, III • COLORED PENCIL



Nightingale

The crystal crown you made of tears
Balanced lightly on your head.
I saw you glance
At the moon when those lips whispered,
“Would you like to dance?”
Your solo waltz of a million words
Made the space around you blank.
The white roses bowed to your reign,
And withered as you sang.
Oh hopeless nightingale in the night,
Oh lost soul who still dares
To search for a love to save your sins,
When you sold your own love to the wind.

—Elsa Jaysing, V

this is it,
this is the end.

VI.

Nervousness tangible in the air
Baby faced and out of place
Look to the left
Look to the right
This is it,
This is where it begins.

V.

Pulsing beat, crowded gym
Iron fists, open hearts
Underground dwellers
But we rule in our own eyes
This is it,
We aren't the kids we were last year.

IV.

Now, enter the jungle
Where hopeless adoration leads to trouble
The cushioned walls turned to steel
Reputations start to bubble
Colors start to change
This is it,
This is the bottom, don't mess it up.

III.

Big and bad
The double digits say it all
Striving for glory, laughing at the past
New friends, new habits
A new scene to explore
This is it,
We have superiority on our side.



II.

Put the pedal to the floor
This is the worse one yet
The finish line is so close
But still miles ahead
Shed the skin of a regretful past
Untangle the web
Of lovers and lies
This is it,
We can taste the end.

I.

Time slipped quickly
Like summer air through screen doors
Chiseled faces, glowing teeth
This world is ours
Blood, sweat, and tears
With futures in white envelopes
Faces forgotten, faces remembered
Let the good outshine the bad
Fallen soldiers, but we are survivors
You did it
This is it,
This is the end.

— Jasmine Quiñones, I



